

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2018

Donald J. Trump
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For centuries, our nation has served as a beacon of hope to those seeking a better life for themselves and their family. Refugees fleeing violence and persecution in their homeland have long seen the United States as an inclusive, accepting nation. We are concerned your administration has abandoned this principle by abdicating our role as a global leader in the refugee crises. Given our country's strong history of supporting refugee resettlement, it is disturbing to learn the United States is on track to accept the lowest number of refugees since the modern resettlement system went into effect in 1980.

The United States makes a commitment to the world on the number of refugees that we will accept every year. While the Presidential Determination in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 for the number of refugees accepted was 110,000, your administration slashed this number to only 45,000 refugees in FY 2018. This is a historical low. Over halfway through FY 2018 just 10,584 refugees have been resettled to the United States. By contrast, 39,098 refugees were welcomed to our nation in the same time frame during FY 2017. Based on the number of refugees the United States has resettled this FY, refugee resettlement organizations believe we are on track to admit approximately 23,000 refugees. It is a pathetic statement to the world for our nation to champion "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" but fall far short of our already reduced commitment.

The world is currently in the midst of the worst refugee crisis in history. Over 65 million people across the globe have been forcibly displaced from their homes because of violence, persecution, and war. The U.S. has a national security and moral imperative to welcome refugees, who are the most thoroughly vetted people who enter our country. America taking a leadership role during this crisis bolsters our credibility as a nation of immigrants founded on the promise to welcome those seeking a better life.

Despite this stark reality, your administration has slowed the resettlement process through executive orders, administrative roadblocks, and lack of proper staffing. Repeated attempts to bar individuals from certain countries and trying to suspend family reunification programs only hurt our ability to be a global leader in resettling refugees. While a federal judge has ordered the follow-to-join cases to resume in late December, fewer than 25 individuals arrived in the first five weeks after the program's resumption. By comparison to President Obama's Administration,

about 200 such individuals typically arrived each month. Tragically, the families that have been left waiting have been given little to no explanation about their status. As a result, they have seen their completed background checks and medical exams expire while they wait notice on their next steps.

An additional hurdle hurting our resettlement efforts is that United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has assigned more of its Refugee Affairs Division officers to the border and to asylum offices in the interior of the United States instead of abroad. This has caused the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to cut back drastically on trips for employees to screen refugees in other countries, known as circuit rides. In the first quarter of this fiscal year, DHS cut its circuit rides to fewer than five locations abroad. By comparison to President Obama's Administration, this is less than one-third of the number that occurred during the same time-frame. In addition to the trips being shorter and staffed with fewer officers, there were no trips to the Middle East. It is our understanding that despite DHS adding more locations to the second quarter trip, the rides will remain shorter than the usual six-to-eight-week duration, and still include no Middle East locations.

Refugees undergo the most thorough vetting process of any individual coming to the United States. Leaving refugees in limbo and without answers about their potential resettlement in our country is devastating to individuals and families who have been waiting to reunify or seeking a better life. In light of the many issues with the refugee resettlement program highlighted above, we respectfully request your prompt response to the following questions:

1. January 21, 2018, was the last day of the Administration's 90-day deadline to complete the review of refugee screening procedures from the eleven countries who currently require a Special Advisory Opinion (SAO), following the previous 120-day ban.
 - a) What steps has your administration taken to immediately resume processing refugees from these eleven countries?
 - b) Please detail any additional requirements and screening that will be added for refugees from these countries.
 - c) What assurances can your administration provide that these procedures will not unduly prevent Muslim refugees, or nationalities with large Muslim refugee populations, from passing the screening process?
2. Refugees barred from resettlement by Executive Order 13815 and its accompanying Memorandum allowed for individuals to be admitted based on national interest waivers.
 - a) How many waivers have been issued since October 24, 2017?
 - b) Please provide a breakdown of the nationality of individuals provided waivers.
3. On December 23, 2017, the Western District of Washington imposed an injunction on the terms of Executive Order 13815, and its accompanying Memorandum, requiring the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program to continue processing and admitting refugees from SAO countries or seeking admission as a follow-to-join refugee, if they have a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States.

- a) What instructions has USCIS or the Department of State provided to refugee resettlement agencies and/or resettlement support centers since December 23, 2017, regarding processing of refugees in compliance with this injunction?
 - b) Refugees in the follow-to-join program are generally interviewed through U.S. Embassies rather than by Refugee Officers. How has USCIS communicated instructions to U.S. Embassies regarding processing of follow-to-join refugees in compliance with the injunction?
 - c) Since December 23, 2017, how many refugees subject to SAO requirements have been admitted to the United States?
 - d) Since December 23, 2017, how many follow-to-join refugees have been admitted to the United States? Please provide a breakdown of the nationality of individuals admitted through follow-to-join.
 - e) Since December 23, 2017, how many interviews have been scheduled for refugees subject to SAO requirements? How many have been conducted?
 - f) Since December 23, 2017, how many interviews have been scheduled for follow-to-join refugees subject to SAO requirements? How many have been conducted?
 - g) How many refugees subject to SAO requirements and follow-to-join refugees are considered travel-ready? How many of them have travel scheduled?
 - h) What circuit rides are planned for the remainder of fiscal year 2018? Please provide the planned dates, location, and number of Refugee Officers who will participate.
4. The resettlement of Iraqis who aided the United States mission in Iraq has slowed to a trickle. The Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, established to facilitate a legal pathway to safety for wartime partners, closed to new applications in 2014. They now must apply through the Direct Access Program for U.S.-affiliated Iraqis.
 - a) What steps is the United States Refugee Admissions Program taking to ensure that wartime partners who served alongside U.S. Armed Forces and other government personnel continue to have access to a path to safety?
 - b) How many Iraqi allies remain in the Direct Access Program application pipeline?
 - c) How many USCIS interviews of Iraqi allies have been held since January 27, 2017?
5. Already midway through FY18, only 10,548 refugees have been resettled. This is far from the more than 22,500 that should have been resettled in order to keep pace with meeting the 45,000 cap for FY 2018. As a tragic example: Halfway through FY 2018, only 44 Syrian refugees – a country whose humanitarian crisis only escalates – have been admitted. From April 1-15, 2018, zero were resettled.
 - a) Why is the number of resettled refugees so low, given that there are many refugees who were approved for resettlement last year who were not able to enter?
 - b) Are security clearances for refugees still being coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security, or have those responsibilities been transferred to other agencies? If other agencies are handling these decisions, which agencies, and how are operations ensuring that cases are being processed efficiently?

- c) How many additional refugees do you estimate will arrive because of the December 23, 2017 court ruling than previously estimated?
 - d) Has the US requested that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees limit future referrals of individuals from specific regions or specific nationalities?
 - e) How many Yazidi refugees have been resettled this fiscal year?
 - f) How many Syrian refugees overall does the administration plan to resettle this FY? Are there any plans to make up for the shortfall in resettling Syrian refugees, as successfully occurred in FY 2016, when more than 12,500 Syrians were resettled?
 - g) Are any plans being made to resettle a greater number of Rohingya refugees to the United States?
6. There have been many transitions and vacancies across the administration that have impacted the refugee resettlement process. How have these staff issues impacted the resettlement of refugees?
- a) Are there any plans to appoint an Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration?
 - b) How does the Administration plan address the lack of Refugee Affairs Division officers dedicated to handling refugee resettlement cases abroad since USCIS reassigned individuals to the border and to asylum offices in the interior? Does the Administration plan to hire additional Refugee Affairs Division officers?
 - c) Please detail all plans the Administration has to screen refugees in other countries. Are additional staff or resources needed to schedule more screenings to meet our FY 2018 resettlement goals?

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response to the above questions which will better inform our understanding of how your administration is addressing the current refugee crisis.

Sincerely,


Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress


Alma Adams
Member of Congress

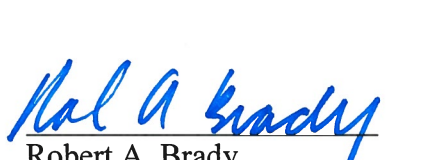

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

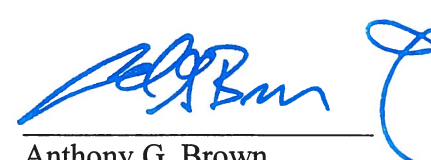

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

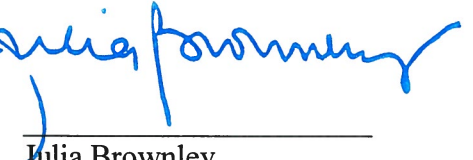

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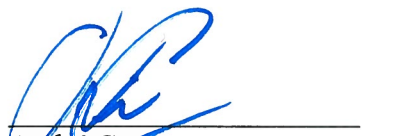

Anthony G. Brown
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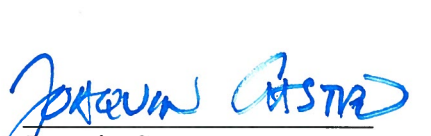

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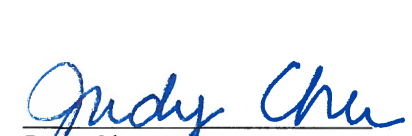

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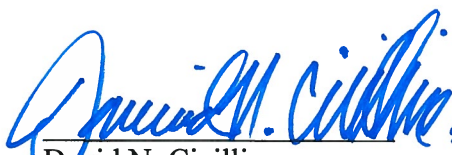

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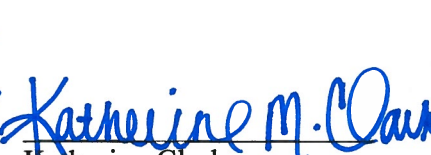

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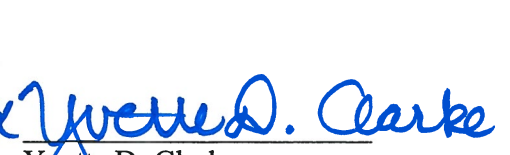

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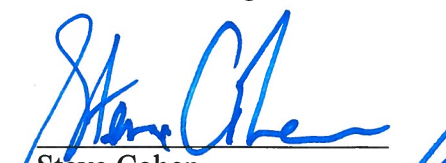

Joaquin Castro
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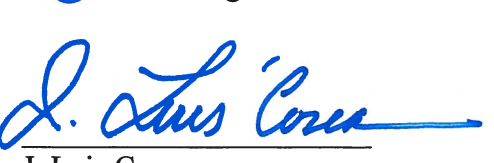

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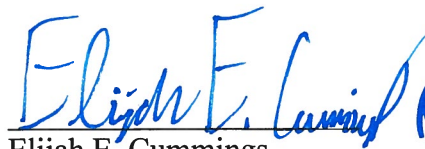

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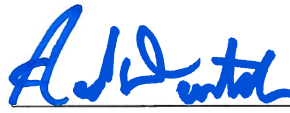
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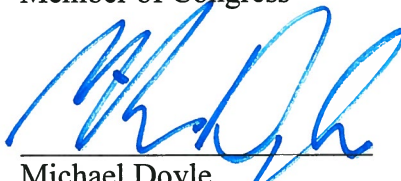
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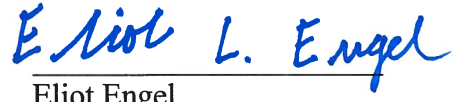
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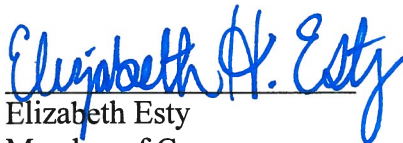
Keith Ellison
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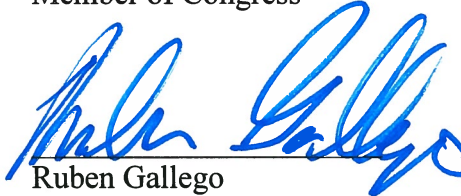
Elizabeth Esty
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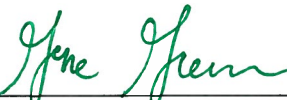
Bill Foster
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Lois Frankel
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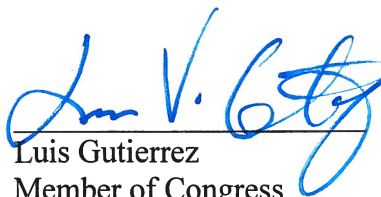
Ruben Gallego
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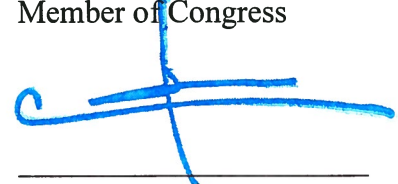
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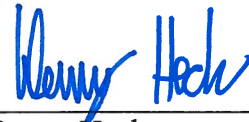
Luis Gutierrez
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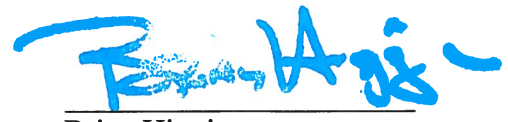
Colleen Hanabusa
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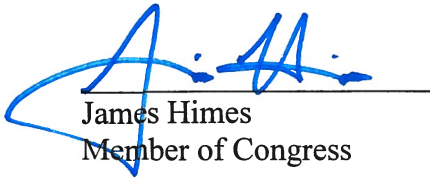
Alcee L. Hastings
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Denny Heck
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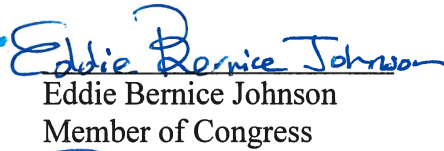
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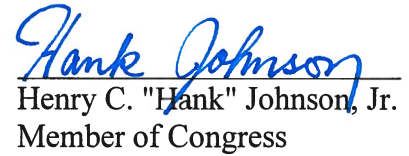

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Jared Huffman
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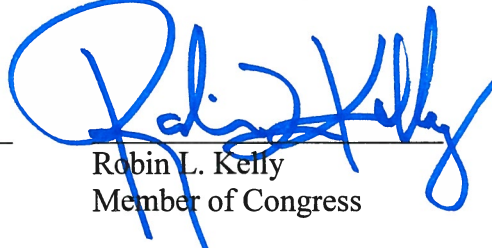

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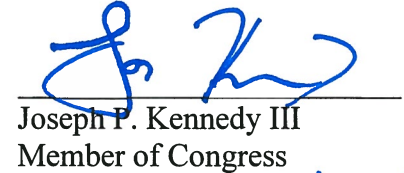

Pramila Jayapal
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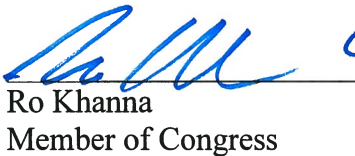

Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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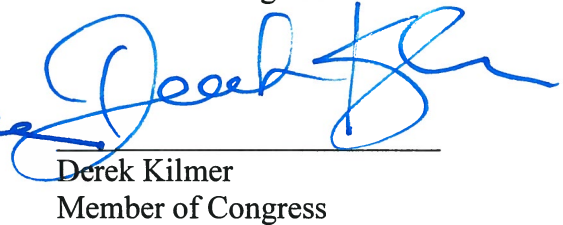

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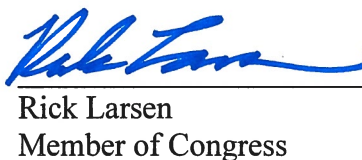

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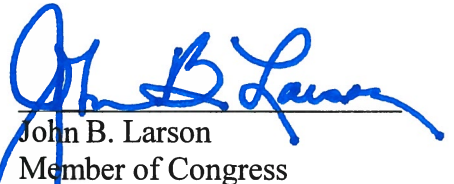

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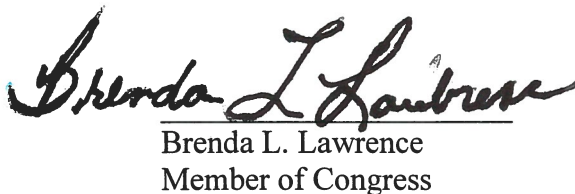

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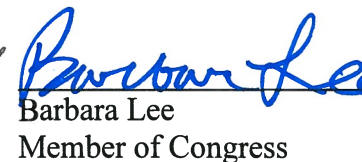

Derek Kilmer
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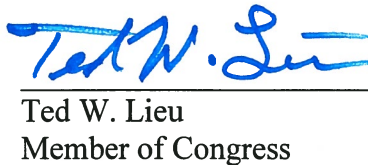

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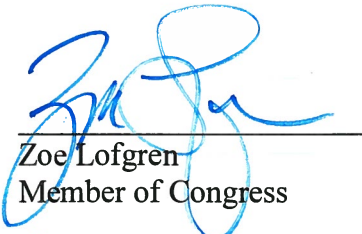

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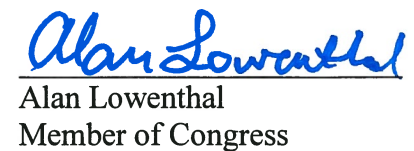

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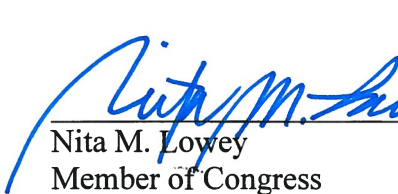

Barbara Lee
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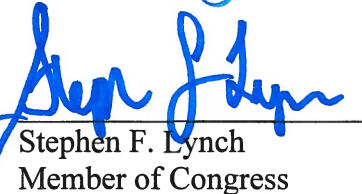

Sandy Levin
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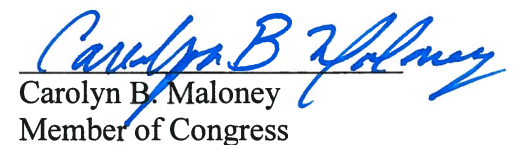

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Mike Quigley
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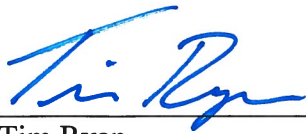
Jamie Raskin
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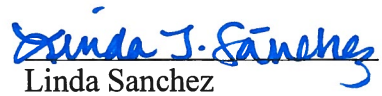
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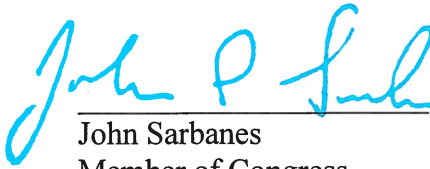
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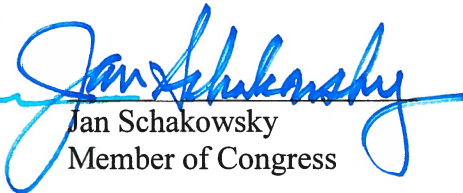
Tim Ryan
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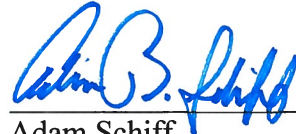
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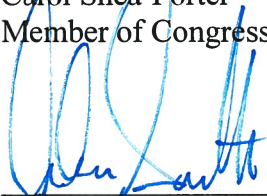
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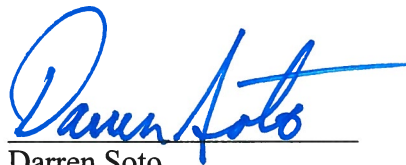
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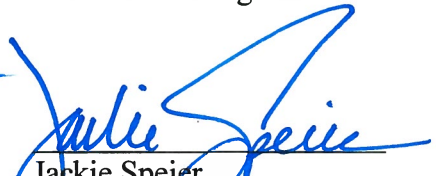
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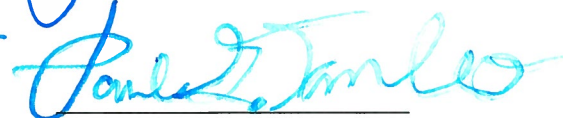
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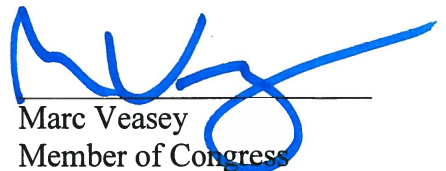
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Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
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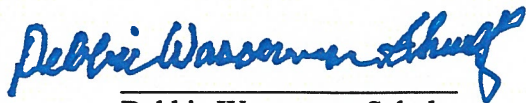
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



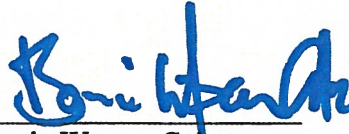
Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress



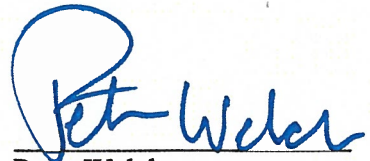
Timothy Walz
Member of Congress



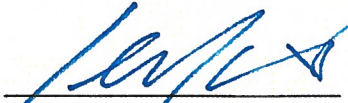
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

CC: Mike Pompeo, United States Secretary of State
Kirstjen Nielsen, United States Secretary of Homeland Security
Alex Azar, United States Secretary of Health and Human Services